

I am submitting the following letter to the editor on behalf of Mohd Salleh Kassim, Executive Director of the American Palm Oil Council, in response to yesterday's article, "New Research on Malaysia's Odd, Elusive Tapir." Please contact me, Ashley Vanarsdall, with any questions you may have. My number is 202-207-3632. If you need to reach him directly, Mr. Kassim can be reached at: 'kassim@americanpalmoil.com'. Thank you for your time.

To the editor:

Conservation efforts in Malaysia – both to protect the rainforests and the species that inhabit them - are of utmost importance to the people of Malaysia. That's why I was disappointed to read the statement in a recent article on the Malay tapir ("New Research on Malaysia's Odd, Elusive Tapir," June 2, 2009) claiming that "Great swaths of the rain forest in Malaysia... had been destroyed for palm oil plantations."

This statement ignores the profound conservation efforts that have been underway for some time now, both by the Malaysian government and the palm oil industry. Their combined efforts have successfully stopped aggressive plantation expansion and have held oil palm-planted areas to stable levels for the past decade. Every single oil palm-planted area in Malaysia is highly regulated and Malaysian law requires that all oil palm plantations and farms are on legitimate agricultural land that doesn't involve recent deforestation of the country's precious rainforests. Malaysia has even launched a Palm Oil Wildlife Conservation Fund to further proposals to protect and enhance biodiversity.

The people of Malaysia are dedicated to preserving the environment, and industry and government will continue to explore agricultural practices that protect the rainforests and their inhabitants like the Malay tapir.

Sincerely,
Mohd Salleh Kassim
Executive Director
American Palm Oil Council
Los Angeles

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Attached please find a letter to the editor that was sent to the *New York Times* by Prism Public Affairs on behalf of the American Palm Oil Council.